

### The Fine Arts in General Education

A revision of the general education program of the University--the first undertaken in more than 30 years--was undertaken during 1954-55 by the institution's Curriculum Committee augmented by an ad hoc committee drawn from the faculty of each of the undergraduate colleges. The latter included Dean de Jong as chairman of the subcommittee on Humanities, J. La Var Bateman (Speech) as a member of the subcommittee on Communication Skills, and J. Roman Andrus (Art) as chairman and Leon Dallin (Music) and Preston R. Gledhill (Speech) as members of the subcommittee on Aesthetics.

When the new program received preliminary approval by the entire faculty on Dec. 11, 1954 and was adopted in final form on Jan. 13, 1955, it provided for the first time the inclusion of studies in humanities and aesthetics among the University's requirements for the baccalaureate degree. The revised program prescribed, in addition to the continuing requirement of two hours' credit in religion each term, the completion of the following credits (listed in quarter hours): American History and Government, 5; Physical Science, 9; Biological Science, 8; Social Science, 15; and Humanities and Aesthetics, 15.<sup>9</sup>

Approved courses in Humanities and Aesthetics included thirteen in Art, eight in Music and Musicology, and seven in Speech, as well as selected courses from the Departments of Archaeology, English, History, Languages, and Philosophy. In 1957 the approved list was expanded to include two courses from the Department of Journalism, which later was to be added to the College as the Department of Communications.

Effective in September, 1960, the University changed from the quarter to the semester system, and the credit requirements for the several areas

<sup>9</sup>B.Y.U. Catalog, 1955-56, pp. 79-84.

were adjusted as follows: American History and Government, 3; Physical Science, 6; Biological Science, 6; Social Science, 5; Humanities and Fine Arts, 8. Two years later an additional general education area was appended which prescribed either 9 hours (later amended to 6 hours) of Mathematics, Science, Logic, or Statistics, or the equivalent of 12 hours (three semester courses) in a language.

Although the new general education program undoubtedly brought more students from other disciplines into contact with courses in the College of Fine Arts, it is likely that the out-of-class cultural contributions of the College continued to be of equal importance in the general education of the student body. As had been traditional for several decades, both a rich lyceum series of appearances by guest artists, and a full calendar of concerts, recitals, operas, dramas, and art exhibits presented by the faculty and students, were offered to the student body and community. To nearly all of them students were admitted by their activity cards. The lyceum program was managed during the 1920s and 1930s by Prof. John C. Swensen, and during the 1940s and 1950s by Prof. Harold R. Clark of the College of Commerce. These managers worked in close cooperation with the Dean and faculty in Fine Arts, and the concert and lecture series was praised by observers as the most distinguished program offered at any university in the country, regardless of size or location.<sup>10</sup>

During earlier years the lyceum attractions were presented in the Education Building, in College Hall, or in the Provo Tabernacle. Beginning in 1941 the Joseph Smith Auditorium served as the principal hall for major concerts and lectures, providing a maximum seating capacity of

<sup>10</sup> Annual and biannual catalogs of the University contain rather complete listings of the lecturers, artists, and performing organizations which were presented during the respective year(s) immediately preceding their publication.

1,100 in the main hall and 1,800 with the addition of folding chairs in the ballroom at the rear of the auditorium.

Another outlet through which the College contributed to the cultural environment of the campus was the regular schedule of university-wide assemblies which had been traditional since the days of Karl G. Maeser. During the Harris administration there were three each week--two conducted by the President and one by the student officers. These were held in College Hall until 1941, and thereafter in the Joseph Smith Auditorium, at a regular morning hour when no classes were scheduled.

During the McDonald administration and the first eight years of the Wilkinson period, one student body program and one devotional assembly with L.D.S. Church leaders or faculty members as speakers, thus reducing the schedule to two per week. In 1959 President Wilkinson returned the schedule to three per week, Monday-Wednesday-Friday, with the Monday convocation known as the Forum Assembly. For this there was booked a series of prominent figures of the national platform circuit, including authors and actors as well as notables in science and public affairs. The George Albert Smith Fieldhouse, with a seating capacity of 12,000, was the site for the regular assemblies during most of the Wilkinson period, except during summer sessions when smaller facilities were used.

At each devotional assembly and many of the forum assemblies it was customary for one or more selections to be presented by a choral organization of the Music Department, or a vocal solo by one of its faculty members. In addition, a faculty member conducted congregational singing for the occasion, and an electronic organ was installed in the fieldhouse to provide accompaniment. On special occasions a major concert would be presented by a visiting professional organization, such as the Utah

Symphony Orchestra or Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. Several times each year the B.Y.U. concert band or orchestra would be presented as part of a special devotional program, and once each autumn a program would feature student finalists in the Heber J. Grant oratory contest conducted by the Speech Department.



### Completion of the de Jong Era

The service of Gerrit de Jong Jr. as the first dean of the College of Fine Arts extended from its founding in 1925 until mid-1959 when, at the age of 67, he was released from his administrative duties and given the title of Dean Emeritus. No other dean in the history of the University had approached that record of more than a third of a century at the helm of a college, and it appeared unlikely that any would match it in the future. He had guided and nurtured the College under three presidents of the University, and saw it achieve its greatest growth during the first decade of the Wilkinson administration.

Between 1925-26 and 1950-51 the cumulative enrollment of undergraduate students in the College had risen from 95 to 304. This was an increase of 220 per cent, compared with an increase of 228 per cent for the University as a whole. The next eight years through 1958-59 saw the College enrollment rise further to 677, a gain of 123 per cent, compared with a gain of 110 per cent for the University.

The faculty of the College increased in numbers during the same eight years, but at a far lower rate than the student enrollment, while the number of those with doctoral degrees increased markedly. The number of full-time faculty increased from 33 to 52, and the number with doctorates from 6 to 14.<sup>11</sup>

In these years also the University art collection grew by several hundred paintings, the number of music concerts and recitals grew from 60 to 125 per year, and the number of major dramatic productions from seven to 20 per year.

<sup>11</sup> The faculty tallies include the Dean as well as department personnel. See Seven Year Report of the President of B.Y.U. (1950-51 to 1956-57) and B.Y.U. General Catalogs, 1950-51 and 1958-59.

The continuing growth of the College's three departments and their partial dispersion into various temporary facilities underscored a need for a permanent home for the fine arts. By 1956 the Department of Speech and Dramatic Arts was located in a cluster of small, pre-fabricated units on the fringe of the Upper Campus, the Music Department was divided between the College Building on Lower Campus and the Joseph Smith Building on Upper Campus, and the Art Department remained somewhat isolated on the upper floors of the Education Building on Lower Campus. The University president, Dean, and department chairmen had been seeking possible solutions to their space problems, and Dr. de Jong recited these needs in a special report presented to the general faculty of the University on April 12, 1956 and added a bit of wry humor at the end.

What of the future? Our faculty members are highly trained and capable teachers. They are diligent--every one works too many hours per day to keep up his health and the quality of his work. We have some good equipment. But our most serious weakness is lack of proper housing. President Wilkinson has been working on this problem for three years. The Art Department needs an appropriate place to do its work. B.Y.U. needs an art gallery. The Music Department needs suitable places to rehearse, without undue interruptions, its four orchestras, its four bands, and its eight choral and opera organizations. We should have 80 individual practice rooms. Our organists need more access to our famous instrument. Our Speech Department has no theater in which its rich series of eight major plays per year might be properly presented. In spite of the fact that the community deeply appreciates attending our exhibitions, concerts, and theatricals, they are not extra-curricular offerings. They constitute the indispensable laboratory outlets for our serious students.

Most sermons begin with a scriptural quotation. Mine finishes with one. I read in Roman's [J. Roman Andrus'] book what is reiterated in the Book of John (Halliday) and in the Apocalypse of Herald [sic] (Hansen): "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Faculty of our College hath not where to lay its head."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> "Report of the College of Fine Arts," April 12, 1956, duplicated copy in College of Fine Arts file, UA.

The Dean was aware that the realization of the College's dream of a new home was a long and complex process, and that it had to begin with careful studies of present and projected needs and their possible solutions. To this stage of planning he and his department heads had applied themselves, studying also the best facilities previously developed on other campuses. Perhaps the most important concept they agreed upon was an integrated center for the entire College, rather than separate buildings for art, music, and drama which was the usual pattern at larger universities. In such a center they envisaged specialized facilities for concerts and dramas, but with a relating space where an art gallery could join them together in a central focus for the fine arts on the campus.<sup>13</sup>

As the Dean noted in his 1956 report, the President was already working on the matter. His vital role was to include gaining authorization of such a center by the Board of Trustees, and approval of its funding by the Church. Inasmuch as the center would be the largest structure yet undertaken on the campus, the gaining of these approvals in the next few years was a major achievement on behalf of the College by President Wilkinson. But the lead-time required for such a project is considerable, and its final architectural planning and construction was to come after Dr. de Jong's release from the deanship in 1959. His role, however, in building the College and working toward its new home was fittingly recognized six years later in the naming of its principal auditorium the "Gerrit de Jong Concert Hall."

Dr. de Jong was often referred to by colleagues and acquaintances as a "renaissance man"--broadly educated, dedicated to truth, and artistically and spiritually sensitive.<sup>14</sup> These qualities were exemplified in various

<sup>13</sup> Author's interviews with Gerrit de Jong, John R. Halliday, Harold I. Hansen, and Richard L. Gunn, 1972 and 1973.

<sup>14</sup> Profiles, B.Y.U. College of Humanities, No. 1, Nov. 1971.

aspects of his personal and professional life. Thus, when he came to B.Y.U. as Dean of Fine Arts, he taught not only piano, organ, and music theory, but also German, French, Spanish, and eventually Portuguese, linguistics, phonetics, and aesthetics, with a professorship in another college. When the director of the B.Y.U. symphony orchestra needed another instrumentalist, he would fill the vacancy; when a faculty drama was being produced, he would play a character role with a flair. In addition to teaching, he was a composer of choral, orchestral, and chamber music, and conducted student groups which performed them.

In a service which matched the length of his deanship, he was a member of the general board of the Deseret Sunday School Union for more than three decades, and wrote lesson manuals for adult classes, including Greater Dividends from Religion and Living the Gospel. With his fluency in six languages he was effective in addressing L.D.S. Church conferences and Sunday School conventions in Europe and Latin America in the people's native tongues.

As a linguist he wrote papers on the teaching of modern languages, and translated scientific and artistic materials. He was a recognized scholar in German and Brazilian literature and culture, and published articles on those subjects.

With all of his activities, he maintained a personal interest in the students of his college. In the years before 1946 when each graduate was announced individually in the B.Y.U. commencement exercises, he was the only dean who could call the names of those from his college (up to 40 in number) without referring to a written list.



The Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, which he had helped to foster more than two decades earlier, conferred on him its Distinguished Service Award in 1950. The B.Y.U. Alumni Association presented him the Karl G. Maeser Distinguished Teaching Award in 1959, and at the August commencement in 1972 he received the David O. McKay Humanities Award from the University in recognition of his 47 years of service.

When in 1959 he left the deanship and the office he had occupied for 33 years in 240 College Building, he continued full-time teaching as professor of languages for an additional 13 years, with an office in the David O. McKay Building on the Upper Campus. Even through his 70s his hair had no touch of gray, and he was a popular lecturer to student and adult groups. Only when, at the age of 80, he suffered a broken leg in 1972, did he accept retirement and a reduction of his teaching activity to occasionally substituting for a colleague in a class in Portuguese. He continued at his home his writing of books and musical compositions.